

TOWARDS MULTIPART MUSIC

Historical Parallels of Multipart Techniques in Hungary

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Abstract: The North-Western region of Hungarian folk music is particularly interesting in respect of the development of multipart practice in folk music. Thanks to the proximity of the cities Vienna and Pozsony, the former Hungarian coronation town and venue of diets (Pressburg in German, now Bratislava in Slovakian) the region's *embourgeoisement* started earlier than elsewhere. This also manifested in the influence of art music and popular music had on the folk musical repertoire, in the spreading of string bands, or in the appearance of new multipart practices. Meanwhile, the traditional folk culture persisted here in the 20th century and hereby relics of stages of this development were also held. Sometimes historical sources can also be paralleled to them. In Hungarian folk music those melodies of art music-origin which are comparable with historical sources, are often known with folk musical accompaniments which came into use only in the 20th century. But in this area sometimes not only the melody but also the accompaniment has kept the characteristics of earlier eras. In its development the diets held in Pozsony lasting for months or years long were of particular significance, as aristocrats arriving from various other regions brought their musicians who might have learnt from each other. The region preserved relics of later

development of multipart practice, too. The role of musicians working in small towns and playing both for city people and peasants of nearby villages was very important in this development. They equally knew the new trends and the archaic styles. The aim of my article is to demonstrate, how new musical ideals – namely multipart practices – influenced the archaic repertoire of instrumental folk music in the North-Western region of the Hungarian language territory.

STUDYING THE FOLK MUSIC collected in the 20th century the question arises: when and how the music known today could emerge and what effects could occur in its 20th-century stage? This historical point of view can be valid equally for folk music of an area generally, for a single layer of it or for a separate element of folk music. In this paper it will be studied, how a single element of musical practice, namely the multipart technique of instrumental folk music might have changed in a certain Hungarian region.

In the heart of Europe there are a lot of opportunities to study the questions like this, as not only folk musical data but several historical sources from the same area are also available. Changes which took place in multipart folk music practices can be studied by comparing folk musical data with classical musical works, with popular musical pieces which were notated in the 18th and 19th centuries, with descriptions, iconographical data, and with archival and recent sound-recordings.

The possibility of a comparison is peculiarly rich by studying the music of the Northern, North-Western part of Hungarian-speaking area. The Northern part is meant as the second of the folk music dialects of Hungary defined by Béla Bartók.¹ (Figure 1) It is separated from the Southern counties in the West by the Danube and in the East by a boundary of mountains and plains. Music and general culture of this area can be divided into three sub-dialects due to the rivers flowing from North to South, facilitating the

¹ Bartók 1924 /1965: 21.

transport in this direction but obstructing it from West to South.² This study is based on the folk music of the Western and the middle ones of these sub-dialects.

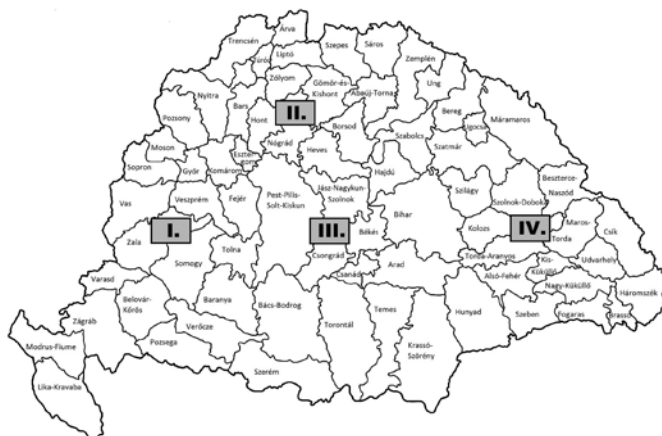


Figure 1. The Hungarian music dialect areas, defined by Bartók

≈ THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF CHANGES

These areas have developed more rapidly than other Hungarian regions. It is especially true for the Western one near to Vienna and to the crowning historical city Pozsony, that is, Pressburg in the language of its one-time German-speaking majority, since 1918 Bratislava (SK), which also gave place to Hungarian diets in the 18th and in the first half of the 19th century. The diets lasted for months or even for years long, and aristocrats and envoys of nobility came from all over the country. Thanks to these events the city became the centre of intellectual life. Because of its geographical location, favourable natural features and trading facilities the population of this region became more prosperous and better educated than average, too. It is also illustrated by the map which shows the literacy rate in Austria-Hungary in 1880–1881.³ In Hungary two territo-

² Tari 2012a.

³ <http://www.zonu.com/fullsize-en/2011-06-29-13985/Literacy-rate-in-Austria-Hungary-1880.html> (accessed 27 June 2014).

ries exceeded by high, 80-90% literacy rate. One is the area including the new capital, Budapest and surrounding areas and the other is a part of the Western territory of the region studied here. In contrast, literacy rate was between 10-20% in some areas of Transylvania. Compulsory education was introduced only by the Education Act of 1868 in Hungary and it could be realized slowly and hardly. The high literacy rate of the territory around Pozsony suggests that education might have previously been general here.

In the middle part of the Northern dialect the mining booming here in the early 19th century was decisive. Partly related to that the social group of craftsmen, carriers and traders quickly emerged. In Hungary, where the vast majority of population lived from agriculture in the 19th century and where trade and cash flow was in a rudimentary stage⁴ the presence of this emerging social group implied not only economic prosperity but new approaches, openness and embourgeoisement. A further important factor was the relatively large class of noblemen, who did not have to live in much better conditions than the peasants, but their mentality, their efforts to be educated and their intention to be separated from the peasantry differentiated them from the others.

The early process of urbanization facilitated to appear the demand for urban music, which means in our case also the multipart music of big string bands consisting of one or two violins, viola, bass (*hegedű, brácsa, bőgő*), and generally *cimbalom* and clarinet (*klarinét*). Similar bands became popular in higher social groups in the 18th century and increasingly among the people. It was a new phenomenon in Hungarian peasant culture generally, in which there was often required only one musician for example for a peasant wedding even in the early 20th century⁵, and bands often consisted of two musicians.⁶

4 As late as 1910, more than two-thirds of the population still derived its livelihood from the soil, while about one-sixth did so from industry and mining. For more about the topic, see: Carlile Aylmer Macartney: "Social and Economic Developments." In: "Hungary." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/276730/Hungary/34807/Social-and-economic-developments> Last updated 5-29-2014.

5 Kodály 1960: 112.

6 Sárosi 1967: 60, 110.

On the other hand, the region, especially the middle part of it developed slower in the following decades. The middle area fell behind along with its declining mining industry to the end of the 19th century. The Western part maintained its advantage but Pozsony lost its role in leadership to Pest prospering from the 1820s on. After the First World War, most of the whole area were set apart from Hungary.⁷ Other relevant areas became the rim of the country, and their economical and cultural relationships were broken. Moreover, the locations where instrumental folk music could be collected in the 20th century are somewhat separated geographically due to the arms and swamps of the Danube in the West and to the mountains in the East. Nevertheless, partly because of its edge position the area preserved its traditions, included the remembrance of the former progress of urbanization for long time. The repertoire of the string bands were collected from the 1950s on, and additional sound-recordings were also made partly from the same musicians till the end of the 20th century.

Transmitters of the changes of instrumental music were first of all Gypsy musicians and at the beginning of 20th century the musicians of the folk brass bands. Gypsy musicians were reported from as musicians of aristocrats from the end of 18th century on gradually took over the function of professional musicians in some territories in Hungarian-language area.⁸ Their role was determinatively important in the entertaining music of the whole Hungarian society in the 19th century and even to the World War I, and they served as the primarily performers of instrumental folk music even in the 20th century. Gypsy musicians appeared first of all as players of string instruments (*hegedű*/violin, cimbalom, as well as in band) which were being new and fashionable at the beginning of their popularity.⁹ They typically did not play the instruments of older Hungarian tradition, namely the *duda* (bagpipe), the *furulya* (flute) and the *tekerő* (hurdy-gurdy). These instruments existed later only by Hungarian peasants, shepherds and others from lower social classes, and were overshadowed by Gypsy musicians. One of the reasons of penetration of Gypsy musicians is

7 About the consequences of the Peace Treaty of Trianon see Tari 1999: 20–21.

8 See Sárosi 1978.

9 About the using of other instruments among different social stratas see Tari 1997a, *ibid.* 2008.

that it was despised by peasants to play music for pay. Another reason was the intention of Gypsies to develop their skills by techniques and by fashions of repertoire. However, their appearance did not necessarily brought elementary changes in folk music, as they always played according to the requirements of their audience. In traditional villages they played old folk music, too. In the Northern dialect the Gypsy musicians role as transmitters became, however, above average. One reason for this could be the decentralization, a characteristic of this area, particularly the Eastern part of it. The small but urban towns were not separated culturally from the surrounding villages, actually, they were closely related to each other. For example, their musicians went to make music also in the neighboring small villages. Accordingly, they played repertoires of several social groups. They knew what to play at a village wedding, moreover, what kind of even older dance tunes would like to hear a shepherd joining occasionally to the peasant entertainment. On the other hand, it was normal for them to play in demanding manner which was required by urban public, to use harmonies, and to learn the new fashion music. In addition, their audience would be more open to novelties here.

≈ HISTORICAL LAYERS OF MULTIPART TECHNICS

Hungarian folk music is basically monophonic (one-part music) and predominantly vocal music.¹⁰ In the instrumental folk music, peasants usually did not demand harmonization in the sense of classical music. It is a good example the duo only of violin and *gardon*, a chord instrument which is played on as a percussion. This was and still is used in Gyimes, a small, peripheral region of Transsylvania.¹¹ Even in the 20th century there existed another old pattern of multipart music, namely the drone accompaniment which had been popular in the Middle Ages in higher social strata, too. In fact, it is rather a manner to enrich and intensify the sound than a real

¹⁰ See the article “Hungary” of Lujza Tari in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Ethnomusicology*, (a new reference to be published in 2016). General Editor Janet L. Sturman, University of Arizona Tari 2013.

¹¹ Sárosi 1967: 61–62.

multipart technique, even in the case of alternating two pitches on an accompanying pipe of bagpipe. Drone accompaniment was represented in 20th-century folk music of Hungary primarily by the bagpipe and the hurdy-gurdy. The bagpipe was kept in few places and by the end of 19th century remained in the tradition first of all as shepherd instrument. However, in the Western region of our territory, bagpipe was popular for long time in spite of urbanization, partly because of the poverty brought by World War I which caused the people to be unable to pay a string band for every *divertissement*. It is normal that the tune which was played on bagpipe because of need or other reasons got simple drone accompaniment. But the memory and popularity of the character and repertoire of the bagpipe music influenced also the taste of the community in spite of the newer music fashion which was living here similarly. Old bagpipe tunes, imitation of their sounds and the manner of bagpipe playing remained a characteristic element of string music. Some data are known from here about requiring favorite bagpipe tunes, bagpipe dances to play by the violinist, who also were commanded to play them like a bagpiper¹², and bagpipe sounding tunes which were played on the violin (with *scordatura*) are collected, too. A typical bagpipe tune was played as *Dudapolka* (Bagpipe polka). The bagpipe-like drone of viola and bass are accompanying the part of the violin, which is imitating bagpipe as well by playing simply the melody in a constant legato but stout manner.¹³ (Figure 2)

Only on the basis of folk music, we could not know when and how the newer patterns of instrumental folk music emerged from drone-type sounding-taste. Fortunately, however, we have got other sources like folk musical themes of classical music, and popular dance music published at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. The geographical territory whose music is studied here is very close to the scene of life-work of masters of the Viennese Classical era. In the works of Joseph Haydn, who lived for

¹² Tari 1986.

¹³ JÓka (Ex Pozsony county, now Jelika SK), in 1984. Collected by István Halmos, István Németh, Gyula Pálffy, Julianna Szakál. Three-member Gypsy band, led by Péter Tamkó. Archiv number in the Institute of Musicology RHC of HAS, Folk Music Archive: AP 13499b. The recording was published in AHFM 2012. The recording is also available on this website: <http://zti.hu/online database/publishedfolkmusicrecordings>

Figure 2. *Dudapolka*, played by Gypsy band

a lot of years in Eszterháza located on the Western edge of the region in question, several Hungarian themes can be found.¹⁴ Haydn often used bagpipe-like accompaniment in them, also to accompany typical violin figures which are known also in later folk music. Thus, his works show the strong presence of bagpipe-like *bordun* sound at that time. In other cases, the instruments imitate the so-called *dűvő*, a common pattern of accompaniment in Hungarian string folk music, in which two chords are articulated in each bow stroke, and the second is emphasized. For example, *dűvő*¹⁵ technique is discoverable in the accompanying parts of the excerpt of the final movement of Haydn's Keyboard Concerto in D Major, called "*Rondo all'Ongarese*," (Figure 3) and of a Hungarian¹⁶ excerpt of the op. 76 C-Major String Quartet, the so-called "Emperor" quartet which was dedicated to the a Hungarian count.¹⁷ Parts of Haydn's works like these are early docu-

¹⁴ See Riskó 2010.

¹⁵ The word is etymologically unknown; probably is an imitative word.

¹⁶ For the Hungarian connections of the movement of the quartet, see Somfai 1986

¹⁷ Joseph Haydn: Keyboard Concerto in D Major, arranged for two pianos III. Rondo all'Ongarese 33–38. and Joseph Haydn: String Quartet in C "Emperor", op. 76 No. 3 I. 68–70.



Figure 3-4. J. Haydn, *Rondo all'Ongarese* (measures 33-38.)
J. Haydn, *String Quartet op. 76 No. 3. I.* (measures 68-70.)

ments of folk musical *dúvň* technique of accompaniment: the keyboard concerto was published in 1784, the quartet arose in 1797. (Figure 4)

But even the *dúvň* pattern was often composed by Haydn in a manner to sound like bagpipe. The two excerpts cited above are examples of this phenomenon, too, which suggests that the old drone sound might have influenced the string music, namely the emergence of the *dúvň* accompaniment which sounds as powerfully as the *bordun* of bagpipe.

In the case of Haydn, it is a question if the composer made an effort to compose music sounding like authentic folk music. However, as it was mentioned above, it is known from iconographical and written sources

that Haydn's time was really the age when the role of bagpipe was taken over by the string band lead by violin, and this often meant that bagpipe and strings played together, too.

Folk-like sounding is often evoked by the intentionally simple, moreover, often awkward, unhandy feature of *dűvő* accompaniment, as it appears in the piece entitled *Zingarese* by Anton Zimmermann. (Figure 5)



Figure 5. *Zingarese* by A. Zimmermann¹⁸

Bagpipe sound is not characteristic for folk-like Hungarian tunes or Hungarian dances by Beethoven, Weber¹⁹ and some lesser known composers. This could be explained by the declining fashion of bagpipe.

These and other historical sources suggest that the very simple but conscious harmonization was common even in the local practice of that time. Simple harmonization based only on the main accords of tonic and dominant functions was living in the instrumental folk music of archaic territories of Hungary, for example in Transylvania in the 20th century, too. The most archaic layers of instrumental music disappeared from the local practice of the Northern and North-Western territory to the age of the instrumental musical collections at the mid-20th century. However, the simple technique of harmonization consisting of the main tonic and dominant triads was maintained. Although 20th-century musicians knew even more complex harmonies, they used simple chords by some simple tunes, which could be just accompanied by complex harmonies. By accompanying the tune of the fast part of a *verbunk* dance, musicians used only the I and V triads of the tonality, despite the fact that also IV triad or other triad of subdominant function could be let in, to create a tonic-subdominant-dominant-tonic course

¹⁸ Papp 1986: 84. No. 3. The sources of the work see *ibid.* 384.

¹⁹ See e.g. Pethő 2000, Tari 2009.



Figure 6. *Bertóké-verbunk*, played by Gypsy band²⁰

which is a basic element of Viennese Classical music. Other more complex harmonies were also omitted. (Figure 6)

This phenomenon does not mean that the musicians preserved the older harmonization of older tunes together, but it shows that neither the musicians nor their public necessarily demanded to use more recent and complicated harmonies by older and more simple tunes. The complex harmonization by these tunes, for example, the use of diminished seventh is an indication of the intention of musicians to leave behind the tradition.

In the late 18th century a new style of national popular music emerged from some sources: from Hungarian popular dance music, from Baroque and Classical art music²¹, and from folk music. Particularly important were in this process the Hungarian diets mentioned above, held in Pozsony in the 18th century and in the first half of the 19th century.²² Aristocrats arriving from various regions of Hungary brought with their musicians

²⁰ *Bertóké verbunk* (Bertók's verbunk). Violin, viola, bass. Józsa (Ex Pozsony county, now SK), 1984. Collected by I. Halmos, I. Németh, Gy. Pálffy, J. Szakál. Transcribed by Lujza Tari. Archiv number: AP 13498g. The recording was published in AHFM 2012 as well as on this website: <http://db.zti.hu/24ora/dalok.asp>

²¹ Tari 1990: 7–12.

²² Szabolcsi 1964. Chapter VI. "The Verbunkos", Tari 2012b.

who also might have learned from each other. The city became a center of development of Hungarian music. The new music style, called *verbunkos*, was rather popular music, which was partly played to the new-fashioned national dance of men, but there was an ambition to create national art music on them, too. Folk musical reliques are also held by the *verbunkos*, which naturally influenced the instrumental folk music of the neighboring area, namely the music of men folk dance dating back to the older age, whose new layer was also called *verbunk*.²³

In some folk musical *verbunk*, musical connections can be identified with *verbunkos* sources from the second half of the 18th century and of first half of the 19th century. Some parallels are known to a *verbunk* tune of the Northern area (Figure 7)²⁴ one of which a Hungarian dance published in 1803. (Figure 8)²⁵

The parallelism can be perceived by style, by the formal structure of melodies, by rhythm, tonality and harmonical conception even in the cases when the melodies are not the same. Unlike melodies of the old layers of Hungarian folk music, the form of these *verbunk* tunes are often parallel to the periodic structure of Viennese Classical music.²⁶ Moreover, most of the tunes show explicit impact of the harmonization of classical music, in so far as the courses of tonic-subdominant-dominant-tonic functions are hidden in their melody. The appearance of subdominant is a new phenomenon compared to the archaic strata of instrumental folk music practice. However, it is only a hypothesis that the influence of *verbunkos* also expanded to the folk musical harmonization. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that the harmonization of folk musical *verbunk* dance tunes of this area is unified and it corresponds to the plain types of historical *verbunkos*. Any-

²³ Tari 1997b, *ibid.* 2012b.

²⁴ *Miskolci verbunk*. (A *verbunk* from Miskolc) Violin, viola, bass. Collected from Szádvár-borsa-Szilice (Ex Gömör-Kishont county, now SK), in 1961. Collected by János Manga. Transcribed by Lujza Tari. Archiv number: AP 16916j. The recording and the transcription was published in AHFM 2012. The recording is also available on this website: <http://db.zti.hu/24ora/dalok.asp>

²⁵ „Ausgesuchte Ungarische Nationaltaenze im Clavierauszug von verschiedenen Zigeunern aus Galantha.“ No. 21. Published in 1803, Wien. Newly published: Papp 1986: 199. For further parallels see *ibid.* 172, 188, 221, 275 and 306.

²⁶ See Tari 1983.

The musical score is written for three systems, each with three staves (treble, middle, and bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The tempo and meter markings are as follows:

- System 1:** Starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 108$. It includes markings for *accel.* and *al* (allegro) with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 116$. It also includes another *accel.* marking and an *al* marking with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 120$.
- System 2:** Continues the melodic and harmonic development.
- System 3:** Features a section marked *accel.* with rapid sixteenth-note passages in the treble staff.
- System 4:** Changes to a 2/4 time signature. The melody is more rhythmic, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes.
- System 5:** Continues the 2/4 time signature section, ending with a repeat sign.

Figure 7–8. Miskolci verbunk; A notated „Ungarische Nationaltanz”, 1803

Figure 9. *Vasvári verbunk*²⁷

how, the possibility of classical harmonization is hidden in tunes like this. Thus they could serve as a basis of new ideals of harmonization in contrast to old tunes in pentatonic or modal tonalities.

The notated sources of later decades provide less basis for comparison. Moreover, there is another source type, which have not been studied yet in the aspect of folk music: the early popular gramophone records. A lot of popular gramophone recordings of urban Gypsy bands from early 20th-century Hungary are now available online, too. On the homepage gramofononline.hu, hundreds of recordings of the most famous Gypsy bands are published. The vast majority of them are Hungarian popular music and especially a part of tunes of the national dance, the *csárdás* are close to the newer layers of Hungarian instrumental folk music collected from the 20th century. It is instructive to compare them to folk music from the point of view of harmonization.

The *verbunk* tune which existed in the instrumental folk music of a lot of settlements of the Northern territory in the 20th century as a tune of male dance (Figure 9) is known from 19th-century notated sources, too. However, the accompaniment of the tune in historical sources do not reflects to the sound of folk musical bands. *Verbunk* tunes were not enough present on the early gramophone recordings of urban Gypsy music. This tune is an exception: it was recorded by the band of Béla Berkes, one of the most famous orchestras of Hungary (Figure 10). Berkes has played also in the Northern territory and knew the tune presumably from here. His gramophone records of this tune was made around 1909 and 1910. The interpretation of Berkes is

²⁷ *Vasvári verbunk*. Two violins, viola, cimbalom, bass. Alsókálósa (ex Gömör county, now SK). Collected and transcribed by Bálint Sárosi in 1963. Archiv number: AP 5909j.

Figure 10. *Régi magyar toborzó*²⁸

in almost all respects – melody, rhythm, tempo, character – similar to those of the folk records of the tune. However, it is typical for the popular music of that age that the band of Berkes often used diminished seventh chords which is not present in the folk interpretation of the tune.

On the other hand, other folk musical tunes which are connected to the new *csárdás* dance fashion and which are typical both of the 19th-century song collections and of the repertoire of early popular gramophone records, are accompanied with new-fangled harmonies in folk music, too. A lot of *csárdás* tunes of the Northern dialect originated in popular music at end of the 19th and early 20th centuries (as in other geographical territories, too), due to the early process of urbanization. These new-fashioned tunes were held together with their characteristic harmonization by village musicians. The next popular tune was published on gramophone discs in around 1910.²⁹ The tune was also collected in the folk tradition as folklorized folk song and as *csárdás* dance music.³⁰ (Figure 11) Melody, tempo, and character of this popular tune are equally taken by folk musicians. The harmonic pattern of the folk music examples can be different or even sim-

²⁸ *Régi magyar toborzó* (Old Hungarian recruiting dance tune). Performed by Béla Berkes and his Gypsy orchestra cca. 1910. Gramophone disc, edited by „Diadal” Record, disc number: D 556. The recording is available on http://gramofononline.hu/2000069007/regi_magyar_toborzo_es_csardasok

²⁹ *Csárdás*. Performed by B. Berkes and his Gypsy orchestra cca. 1910. Gramophone disc, edited by Első Magyar Hanglemez Gyár, disc number: M 8744. The recording is available on http://gramofononline.hu/2046846242/csardas_egyveleg This tune begins at 2: 16.

³⁰ Tune of *Nem bánom, hogy parasztnak születtem* (I don't mind that I was born as a peasant). Hort (Heves county). Two violins, viola, cimbalom, bass. Collected by László Maác, György Martin, Pál Sztanó. In 1967. Archive number: AP 6642e.

Figure 11. *Lassú csárdás*³¹

pler than that of the example from gramophone recording, but the characteristic beginning accompanied by diminished seventh is taken by folk musicians, too.

To sum up: the instrumental folk music of the North-Western region of the Hungarian language area changed in the 19th and 20th centuries continuously, first of all around the towns. The changes are parallel to the development of the region and the process of embourgeoisement. Instrumental music developed from bagpipe music and drone sound toward more complex harmonization which had been learnt from popular music (and partly from also renewed church music). It is remarkable that the accompaniment of tunes did not necessarily change according to the current musical fashion. The audience of musicians presumably did not require them to follow the trends of harmonization by each tunes. Thanks to this phenomenon even the harmonization of melodies originating from several periods became layered, which phenomenon of course does not suggest a historical approach of folk musicians but indicates their sense of the character of the tunes.³²

³¹ *Lassú csárdás* (Slow csárdás). Tune of *Nem bánom, hogy juhásznak születtem* (I don't mind that I was born as a shepherd). Alsókálósa (ex Gömör and Kis-Hont county). Collected by B. Sárosi, 1963. Archiv number: AP 6349b. This and the previous examples were published on <http://db.zti.hu/24ora/dalok.asp>

³² A similar phenomenon in Hungarian folk music of Transylvania was mentioned by István Pávai. Pávai 2012: 371–373.

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